What is claimed is:

1. A method of providing a virtual product to third parties, the virtual product being present in an original version in a digital form having a predetermined quality, the method comprising:

    (a) providing a reduced version of the virtual product, and information relating to a distributor of the virtual product, the reduced version of the virtual product having a quality which is inferior to the quality of the original version, and the information relating to the distributor being associated with the reduced version of the virtual product;

    wherein, on the basis of the information associated with the reduced version, additional information, which indicates that the reduced version of the virtual product has been passed on to a third party by the distributor, may be created if the third party has acquired rights to the virtual product after obtaining the reduced version of the virtual product.

2. The method as claimed in claim 1, comprising:

    (b) passing on the reduced version of the virtual product to the third party; and

    (c) if the third party who has received the reduced version of the virtual product wants to acquire rights to the virtual product in the original version,

        (c.1) performing the transaction required for obtaining a predetermined right to the virtual product in the original version; and

(c.2) upon completion of the transaction, receiving information to obtain the original version of the virtual product, and

(c.3) based on the information associated with the reduced version, creating information indicating that the transaction is based on the passing-on of the reduced version of the virtual product by the distributor.

3. The method as claimed in claim 2, wherein the reduced version of the virtual product is a reduced-quality copy of the virtual product, and wherein step (c.2) includes receiving the original version of the virtual product.

4. The method as claimed in claim 3, wherein step (a) of creating the reduced version includes limiting the bit rate/bandwidth of the original version of the virtual product, inserting voice and/or sounds in the original version of the virtual product, hierarchical coding of the original version of the virtual product while eliminating predetermined improvement layers, and/or cutting the original version of the virtual product.

5. The method as claimed in claim 2, wherein the reduced version of the virtual product is an at least partially encrypted version of the original version of the virtual product, and wherein step (c.2) includes receiving a key for decrypting the encrypted version.

6. The method as claimed in claim 5, wherein step (a) includes at least partially encrypting the original version of the virtual product.

7. The method as claimed in claim 1, wherein step (a) includes introducing additional data into the reduced version of the virtual product.

8. The method as claimed in claim 2, wherein step (b) includes passing on the reduced version via a network, a wireless connection and/or a portable storage medium.

9. The method as claimed in claim 2, wherein the information created in step (c.3) indicates a reward for the distributor.

10. The method as claimed in claim 2, comprising:

   (d) providing a reduced version of the virtual product to the third party who has acquired the predetermined right to the original version of the virtual product; and

   (e) associating further information with the reduced version of the virtual product, the further information relating to the distributor and/or the third party, so as to create, in a further passing-on of the reduced version to a further third party, information indicating that an acquisition of a predetermined right to the original version of the virtual product by the further third party is based on the passing-on of the reduced version by the distributor and/or the third party.

11. The method as claimed in claim 1, wherein the distributor is a first buyer who has acquired a predetermined right to the original version of the virtual product from a provider, and wherein the third party is a second buyer.

12. A computer program having a program code for carrying out the method as claimed in claim 1, if the program runs on a computer.

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